

Will You Marry Me, Miss Bennet?
A Study of Marriage in Jane Austen's Time

An Honors Thesis (HONR 499)

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Abstract

Pride and Prejudice is a novel that has been called simply a "nice romance." Even though Jane Austen writes about love and marriage, it is much more than a romance novel. It explores the impact that class and money had on marriages during the Regency period. By examining the history of love and marriage, one can better understand the marriages presented in the novel. While this thesis focuses on Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy, several other marriages presented in the novel will be studied.

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Introduction

Pride and Prejudice is a timeless novel. Since its inception many people have been fascinated by the way Jane Austen has developed such interesting and popular characters. Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy are used to describe the ideal romance. Why is this novel, as opposed to her other novels, so much more popular? What is the underlying theme in this novel?

Jane Austen is commenting on the societal and emotional aspects of marriages. The concept of love and affection in marriage has changed throughout the ages, but during Regency England, it was undergoing a particularly important change. In *Pride and Prejudice*, there are several different types of marriages that are portrayed, and through the text, it can be determined that a marriage centered on love and equality holds more importance than a marriage of convenience.

History of Love in Marriage

Love within a marriage, or even a relationship, is something that many people today yearn for. We live in a society that thrives on promoting love. All one has to do is to look at the romantic comedies that come out on a yearly basis to find evidence of this fact. How did we as a society decide that love was an essential ingredient in a marriage?

Love has not always been the prime reason for marriage. People's ideas concerning love in a marriage have changed dramatically throughout the ages. According to Stephanie Coontz, "by the end of the 1700s personal choice of partners had replaced arranged marriage as a social ideal, and individuals were encouraged to marry for love" (146). In other words, couples had private relationships rather than getting together for economic gain. Is this really the case, though? Even though *Pride and Prejudice* takes place a little later in time, it seems that not

many of the characters are encouraged to marry for love. In fact, many of the couples in the novel have pressure from family to marry for financial security or class rank.

The Enlightenment brought about many different changes in marriage. The Enlightenment advocated individual rights and the idea that social relationships should be based upon reason, justice, and the pursuit of happiness not by force (Coontz 146). At this point in time, people started believing that marriage should include love. This idea was adopted by different classes of people at different rates. For example, it took a bit longer for people of the working class to accept this new idea (Coontz 147). This was most likely because they could not afford to be romantic in marriage. For them, marriage would continue to be an avenue to financial security.

Even though the Enlightenment ideas spread, there were still many people who were resistant to the idea of love being involved in a marriage. People thought that advocating for love would increase individualism (Coontz 149). To an American who thrives on individualism, this concept may seem natural and praiseworthy. Our whole system is centered on individualism and the pursuit of happiness. However, to many civilizations and cultures, individualism is a threat. In order to keep the status quo, it is important for people to be united in mind and to work together for the common good. Individualism could upset that balance. In the case of love in marriage, if people started to become individualistic, that could mean that women might begin to demand more rights. They might not want to remain in the domestic realm (Coontz 150). Surely that would upset the social order. Many believed that sticking to the status quo concerning love and marriage was the best option.

Throughout most of time, love was simply a bonus in a marriage. People have always fallen in love, but that was never a main reason for marriage (Coontz 15). There were several

factors to consider before entering into the marriage contract, especially for a woman. In many cases, the most important factors were financial security and creating interfamilial ties. Even if love in a marriage were acceptable, it was never to be put above God, parents, or other blood relatives (Coontz 16). Relationships were usually centered on family and family involvement, so it was very important to keep these factors in mind.

Even though love traditionally has been thought to be an addition to marriage, there have been some throughout the ages who have always been proponents of love in marriages. Even Shakespeare and Homer wrote about timeless romances in some of their great works. But, this was not the reality for most people. According to Coontz, “when someone did advocate such a strange belief, it was no laughing matter. Instead, it was considered a serious threat to social order” (15). Perhaps if a person were to decide that love is what a marriage should be centered on, it would shake the community. If an American today decided that they would advocate that marriage should be a contractual relationship centered on financial security and family involvement, it might be considered a threat to social order today or people would consider this strange idea a joke.

Love in marriage was not truly embraced until the Victorian period. Victorians made marriage about love, happiness, and intimacy; love was welcomed and openly expressed (Coontz 177). This could have been because of Queen Victoria’s influence. She was very much in love with her husband and was not afraid to show it. People began to emulate her relationship with her husband. Today, we have stuck to that formula for the most part. In the past, people hoped to have “tranquil affection” in marriage; today people hope that in a marriage there will be love, the ability to choose a partner, and put love above all else (Coontz 20). As people of the modern world, this is the type of marriage that we are familiar with. It makes sense to us. However, it is

important when reading *Pride and Prejudice* to understand the origins of love in a marriage, and how people of that time period viewed the institution.

Often in *Pride and Prejudice* and in other novels of the time, authors used the word “affection” instead of “love.” Why would they do this? The real difference revolves around the meanings of the words. Love is more of an all-encompassing word. Affection has a narrower scope in its definition; it is specific and has a significant undertone. Affection implies that this feeling of fondness is gentle and is grows into endearment and attachment. This idea of love versus affection is important to understand if one wants to really understand the depth of Jane Austen’s writing.

Affection is a more appropriate word to use when describing the increasing romantic emotions in the novel. According to Stuart Tave, Jane Austen uses affection instead of love because it is softer and implies a gradual increase of emotion (31). This is certainly more appropriate for some of the characters in *Pride and Prejudice*. If one were to look at the relationship between Jane and Mr. Bingley, he would agree that their relationship is gradual. They are not in the throes of passion, but it is evident that as time goes on their feelings for each other are magnified.

Through the use of affection, Jane Austen promotes the concept of intelligent love. According to Juliet McMaster in her essay “Love and Pedagogy,” she argues that intelligent love is “the giving and receiving of knowledge about right conduct, in the formation of one person’s character by another, the acceptance of another’s guidance in one’s own growth” (39). As mentioned previously, affection is about a gradual increase of emotions. This increase in emotions can be brought about through intelligence. This type of affection is evidenced by Elizabeth and Darcy. They argue with each other about what is considered right and proper.

They both grow throughout the novel and learn from their mistakes in order to have a better relationship with one another. For example, the changes both go through after Mr. Darcy's first proposal create a deeper affection for one another.

History of Class and Money in Marriage

Money can dictate how people interact with each other. It determines the type of lifestyle that a person can achieve. This can be seen in several different characters in *Pride and Prejudice*. One cannot truly understand how the relationships in *Pride and Prejudice* played out without understanding the monetary aspects that were involved. Clearly, class was an important factor during the Regency period when considering a spouse, and money was closely tied with class.

In Western culture, the need or desire for love in a marriage is a fairly recent concept. According to W. A. Craik, marriage in earlier times was a social contract in which “a man who marries commits himself to heavy responsibilities, and the woman who marries stakes the rest of her life on his performance of them” (94). A man must be ready to provide for his wife, and the woman must stay with him whether he is successful or not. Marriage in European countries revolved around this notion. According to Coontz, marriage was thought of as a working partnership where each spouse was expected to bring something to the marriage (128). For a male, it was his job to be the provider; for the female, it was her job to provide an heir (especially male) for the family. This formula for a marriage was the standard for hundreds of years.

Marriages in Europe were also entered into because two families may have wanted to unite. There were several reasons for this type of arrangement. These marriages may have established ties between families that quarreled or served as a way for the families to pool

resources (Coontz 31). Because of these marriages, the united families would become stronger and have an even better chance of financial survival.

If there was a couple who loved each other and wanted to get married but did not have their family's approval, they would elope. According to Roy and Leslie Adkins, "elopement was the solution where a couple was desperate to marry without parental consent" (13). People would jump through many hoops in order to marry the person they loved. Some ran away to other destinations in England or Scotland to have a quiet ceremony. It would require planning and a great deal of secrecy. If a couple succeeded in eloping, they might jeopardize their families' respectability within the community.

Class rank also made a great impact in early European marriages. Upper class individuals married to keep heirs; it was absolutely necessary for all aristocratic women to marry (Adkins and Adkins 3). If a woman did not marry, she would risk poverty and second class citizen status. It was also usual for people to marry within the same class (Adkins and Adkins 4). This is partially because it would not have been acceptable for individuals to marry outside of rank. More realistically, though, individuals did not associate with others outside of their rank at all. Many would have gone to social gatherings with people of their own class.

Even though marriage spanning class ranks was generally not acceptable, an upper class man could carry on with a woman with lower social status and would not have to marry her (Adkins and Adkins 4). Otherwise, class jumping was not usually acceptable. However, Robert D. Hume suggests that if a person of the gentry began working for him or herself, it would have booted them out of the gentry and into a lower class (293). This is because working was generally associated with the lower classes. People in the upper classes usually inherited their

money and had no need to work. Overall, class often determined who a person was allowed to marry.

Marriage was a fairly risky venture for women during this time period. There were several different negative outcomes that could occur after a couple married. Women often became the property of the man, and her property became his. The two would become one entity being led by the male; he would make the decisions of the household, including those of his wife. Finally, if the marriage did not work out, it was fairly difficult for people to get a divorce.

Parental consent was a very important factor in the success or demise of a marriage. As mentioned previously, parents were interested in strengthening family ties; they were less concerned about whether or not their children loved their future spouses. According to Coontz, in sixteenth century England, "even as the abstract celebration of married love increased, the enhanced right of parents and authorities to veto or invalidate marriage set limits on the number of love matches" (137). If parents did not approve of the match, they might not financially support the couple or they could disown children. If the male party decided to back out of the arrangement after the parents' disapproval, the woman could be in dire straits (Coontz 138). Her parents could still decide to disown her even if the marriage did not fall through. Overall, it was crucial for a couple of the aristocratic and gentry classes to have their parents' blessing.

Another reason why marriage was risky was because of the transfer of property, specifically the woman and any property she owned. When married, a woman passed from her father's possession to her husband's (Adkins and Adkins 5). All of her assets became his. According to Coontz, "the minute he placed that ring upon her finger he controlled any land she brought to the marriage and he owned outright all her movable property as well as any income she later earned" (142). This placed women in a very difficult situation. If she were to have a

business on the side, she would not necessarily be able to keep any of her own money. It might have to go straight to the household account or to her husband. This would bind a woman to her husband because she would have no extra cash to leave. Even so women still had some power as far as their property was concerned. While her property and money was ultimately controlled by her husband, she could influence her husband as to how it was used (Coontz 130).

Sometimes the risks associated with marriage outweighed the benefits and resulted in unhappy endings. Divorce was very uncommon, and those who did divorce usually had the extra money necessary to divorce. Before 1857, there was no widespread divorce law; therefore, if a couple wanted to divorce, they must go through the annulment process within ecclesiastical courts which was expensive (Adkins and Adkins 16). Because divorce was so expensive, many usually just suffered in terrible marriages (Adkins and Adkins 17). Men who had loveless or bad marriages would find their fulfillment in mistresses.

Jane Austen specifically wrote about marriages during the time period that she knew best. The Regency period, the setting in *Pride and Prejudice*, is described by Ivor John Carnegie Brown, as the time period during which the Prince Regent ruled the country because his father was mad. This time is usually considered the first 20 years of the 19th century (11). This specific period ended once a king was restored to the throne. It was a time when people were very class conscious and men and women lived in separate spheres. Jane Austen lived during this period in England, so it makes sense that this is the time period that she would use for her novels.

During this time, the gentry as a class began to emerge and have more prominence. According to P. R. Coss, the term “gentry” was used “to cover the lower strata of landed society once ‘nobility’ became restricted to the peerage” (39). They were not necessarily the aristocrats,

but they were very well off. The members of the gentry were class conscious; for example, they considered property owners to be superior to farmers (Brown 16). The gentry also socialized with each other. Some of their favorite activities included dinner, gossip, dancing, and playing cards (Brown 16). Usually people of lower classes could not engage in these activities because they were working. According to Adkins and Adkins, "leisure was a luxury available only to those with time and money" (206). Also, "an afternoon spent with guests over dinner and in various forms of entertainment was something the idle rich could enjoy" (225). Members of lower classes either did not have the means or the time to entertain guests, and if they could, it was certainly not at the same caliber as the gentry or upper class.

Another aspect of the gentry involved the separation of spheres. Men lived in the wage earning and economy sphere and women lived in the homemaking sphere (Coontz 155). The spheres did not cross. Men generally were not concerned with the workings of the house; their only concern was to provide. Women stayed within the confines of the business of the home. They were rarely allowed to venture into the man's sphere because many thought that they would not understand the complexities of a man's world. Because of these differences it caused some difficulties within gentry marriages. The separation of spheres made it difficult for husbands and wives to discuss intimacy and dreams; therefore, they may become estranged and sought that kind of fulfillment elsewhere (Coontz 188).

Marriage for women during the Regency period was desired. It not only provided them with financial security, but it also provided them with a way to remain in their social class. Single women were often spurned. According to Susanna Clarke, being married offered women more options than being single (3). A single woman would have to rely on the kindness of her family members. A married woman would not have to rely on the generosity of others as much.

These consequences are evident in the lives of Jane Austen and her sister Cassandra. Both ended up living as single women even though they had the opportunity to marry. According to Claire Tomalin, Cassandra Austen's fiancé died and she never decided to find another (159). Jane Austen was proposed to once but declined because esteem and respect were not enough for a marriage in her opinion (Tomalin 180). She also was in love with Tom Lefroy, but he could not marry her because she was not wealthy enough (Tomalin 119). Perhaps this is one reason why Jane Austen never married; she already found her true love, but he could not marry her. Brian Dillon claims that by not getting married, Jane Austen was setting herself up for a life of second class citizenship (213). She and Cassandra had to rely on their brothers for financial security during much of their life.

If a woman lost her husband, it was often advantageous to marry soon after. Widows were often left poor so remarriage was desirable (Adkins and Adkins 19). Jane Austen's mother did not receive very much after her husband died, so she had to rely on her sons to support her (Tomalin 186-187). According to Jo Beverley, the longer a woman was a widow or lived as a widow the more likely it was that she would become destitute (39). This is because the funds that she received from her husband's former estate diminished each year, and the longer she remained single, the more the funds would be depleted. Clearly, it was more advantageous for a woman to marry during this time.

When reading Jane Austen's novels, it is evident that money and love are sometimes at odds with each other. It is important to take that into consideration when looking at the different marriages in *Pride and Prejudice*. According to Adkins and Adkins, "the conflict between marrying for love and marrying for money and social advantage is a common element in Jane Austen's writing" (3). This is evident by looking at Charlotte Lucas and Elizabeth Bennet.

Charlotte looks for a practical marriage where she will be financially secure, but Elizabeth, who looks for something more emotionally worthwhile, puts herself at risk. Overall, “the foundational reality underlying all of Austen’s novels is painfully simple: a genteel woman must either have money or marry money” (Hume 293). This is because women did not have any means of making enough money on their own. As mentioned previously, any extra money that a woman did make would go directly to her husband.

Men were also concerned with the financial aspect of a marriage. Men during this time often married for money and were not considered less worthy as a result (Beverley 35). They would often find a young woman who had a significant dowry in order to secure their finances. According to Coontz, men made their decisions for financial reasons, but also to please parents and friends (139). As mentioned previously, if a man pursued a match that was not ideal or that his family did not approve of, he could be cut off financially.

Readers of *Pride and Prejudice* often have no idea how the monetary figures presented in the novel compare to today’s. Some might think that because of the way Mrs. Bennet discusses money that the Bennets were wanting for money; however, this is not the case. According to Hume, the “principal characters do not feel rich, but all of them are very much of the gentry class” (299). Essentially, people such as the Bennets and the Lucases were very much of the upper middle class. They never necessarily needed more money, but would be more secure if they had more.

In order to understand how money in the novel compares to today, one can calculate the inflation rates and find how much money each character would make today. Mr. Bennet’s £2,000 a year would have been considered part of the top .17% of the population. Obviously, Mr. Bennet was not necessarily hurting for money himself. His daughters, however, would not

see that money at all because the property was entailed to Mr. Collins. Mr. Bingley's £4,000 a year would put him at the top .1% of the population. Finally, Mr. Darcy's £10,000 a year would put him at the top .02% of the population (Hume 297). This is a staggering amount. To put these numbers into an amount that readers can understand, Mr. Bennet would have between £200,000-£300,000, Mr. Bingley would have between £400,000-£750,000, and Mr. Darcy would have between £1,000,000-£1,500,000 (Hume 303). To modern minds, these are hefty sums. This amount of money would definitely keep these families comfortable if it were not for the entailments that were in place.

The topic of money is of central importance to many of the characters in the novel. Today, people might think that the Bennets – particularly Mrs. Bennet – are too preoccupied with money, but there were challenges that these people faced. “A lower income did not merely mean a little economy. It brought danger of sliding to an entirely different level of life” (Beverley 36), especially for a woman facing an entailment of her father's property. The Bennet women really are in dire straits because of their home's entailment and Mr. Collins could turn them out after Mr. Bennet's death (Hume 294). They would then be reduced to a lower class level and might not be part of the gentry class any longer. A similar situation happened to Jane Austen herself. Jane Austen's father made a decent amount of money, but when he died, Jane was at the bottom of the gentry totem pole. She had to rely on her brothers to provide for and take care of her (Hume 290-291).

One may wonder how this issue of money, especially as it relates to class, pertains to *Pride and Prejudice*. Readers see the importance of class through the character Lady Catherine de Bourgh. According to W. S. Maugham, “with regard to Lady Catherine one must remember that in Jane Austen's day rank gave its possessors a sense of immense superiority over persons of

inferior station, and not only expected to be treated by them with the utmost deference, but were” (80). Lady Catherine has significantly more money than the Bennets; therefore, her rank supersedes the Bennets’ rank. This explains why Lady Catherine looks down upon Elizabeth and considers her unworthy of Mr. Darcy. Lady Catherine also has the most power of any of the characters in the novel. She has the ability to make life very difficult for the Bennets, and that is evident from her evening “visit” at the Bennet household.

Lady Catherine is not the only character that is overly concerned with class. Mrs. Bennet, while of a significantly lower class, is also very preoccupied with class distinctions. She constantly discusses marrying her daughters to wealthy men. She has little consideration for their personal merits, only of their financial benefit to her daughters. Caroline Bingley is also very concerned with class distinctions. She demeans Elizabeth for being part of a lower class in the hopes of swaying Mr. Darcy’s affection for her.

Elizabeth Bennet alone seems to not take class into consideration as much as some of her counterparts in the novel. Dillon suggests that instead of being silent and deferring to the upper class, Elizabeth speaks out against her class superiors, such as Mr. Darcy and Lady Catherine (219-220). She refuses to be put into the mold that the aristocracy tries to put the upper middle class. When Lady Catherine comes to Elizabeth’s home at the end of the novel to discuss Mr. Darcy, Elizabeth tells her, “in marrying your nephew, I should not consider myself as quitting that sphere. He is a gentleman; I am a gentleman’s daughter; so far we are equal” (*Pride and Prejudice* 444). She is of the mindset that everyone should be respected no matter their station.

Because class and money are important considerations during the time period, it would seem that some of the marriages that take place in the novel are not realistic. Would Jane and Elizabeth have their happy ending in the real world? According to Hume, it is improbable that

Jane and Elizabeth would actually marry wealth (294). Even though the chance of them marrying wealth was not impossible, it does not seem likely. Elizabeth might have ended up a spinster because of her strong will and desire to marry for love. Jane might have simply settled in her life; she would have been content to have a stable life even if her husband was less than desirable. Reality in *Pride and Prejudice* is shown through Charlotte (Hume 294). She comes from a comfortable family and marries a clergyman whom she did not truly love at all. He is a means to an end for her. She knows that she would be content for the rest of her life, if not overly passionate. In giving Jane and Elizabeth happy endings, Austen is suggesting that there are more important aspects of a marriage other than financial security. Happiness and mutual affection are more important to a lasting marriage.

Money and happiness are usually at odds with one another in Regency period marriages. Usually, wealth was the first priority and happiness was simply a bonus (Adkins and Adkins 3). The more wealthy a person was, the more he or she could afford to look for happiness. The same was not true for all people. Accordingly, Darcy can afford to be stupid in love (Beverley 35). He has enough money that it would not matter if he married significantly below his station. During this time period, Marilyn Butler argues it was evident that “the progress of the two central couples toward matrimony shows what the state ideally means. But for representative people of very different classes in society, it is a transaction involving merely money and status” (213).

Marriages in *Pride and Prejudice*

When reading *Pride and Prejudice* for the first time, many view it as simply a romantic novel. Girl meets boy, girl and boy have some kind of conflict, girl and boy reconcile and get together. This is fairly standard for many romantic novels; however, *Pride and Prejudice* is so

much more than a romantic novel. It is a discussion about the institution of marriage in the Regency period of England. There are several different extremes that are portrayed in *Pride and Prejudice*. Martin Amis argues that there are marriages that revolve around sense and money or marriages that are all passion and lack good judgment (86-87). In the text there are several examples of marriage, some more pleasant for the participants than others. *Pride and Prejudice* presents the reader with five couples who represent different types of relationships.

Each of these couples provides a different example of marriage. Some are more necessity based, while others are passionate, and others still are a little bit of both. Today's readers look at Elizabeth and Darcy hope that they will get together, even if it is simply for romantic value. According Amis in his article "Force of Love," we are Mrs. Bennets when we read because we root for the characters' marriages even more than Mrs. Bennet (83). Can we as readers really understand the important underpinnings that are at work with each of the marriages? To fully comprehend the novel and Austen's views of marriage, it is important to look at these different marriages.

To many readers, the marriage between Charlotte Lucas and Mr. Collins is one of the most repulsive. It goes against most of what the Western world would consider essential in a marriage. Clearly, there is not much love or affection between the two. It is also very evident that they marry each other out of convenience. Collins needs a spouse to set a good example for the church, and she is getting older and needs to marry soon or become a spinster. This marriage portrays the ugly truth for Regency women. If the reader considers this marriage in relation to the time period, she will find the relationship was not that unusual.

Charlotte fits into the category of marrying for financial security and sense. This is evident when she tells Elizabeth that she decides to marry Mr. Collins. She explains that she is

not getting any younger and that by marrying Mr. Collins she will have a comfortable home. Even though Mr. Collins is not her knight in shining armor, she is content with having a home of her own. To the modern reader and Elizabeth, this concept seems appalling. This man is absolutely dreadful. Even if she is comfortable, how could she sacrifice her chance at true love or more importantly, her dignity? By marrying a man like Mr. Collins, Charlotte dooms herself to a life that is very miserable despite being materially comfortable.

To Charlotte, security is of more importance than affection. When Charlotte does tell Elizabeth about her engagement to Mr. Collins, she says, "I am not romantic you know. I never was. I ask only a comfortable home" (*Pride and Prejudice* 164). When Elizabeth comes to visit Charlotte after her marriage to Mr. Collins, Charlotte takes her sister and Elizabeth into her home and shows them around. Mr. Collins is out in the garden, and Charlotte seems more relaxed and at ease. The narrator even says, "When Mr. Collins could be forgotten, there was really a great air of comfort throughout, and by Charlotte's evident enjoyment of it, Elizabeth supposed he must be often forgotten" (*Pride and Prejudice* 203).

Because Charlotte is older than Elizabeth, it is important for her to be married soon. Her sisters are able to come out a year or so earlier and her brothers do not have to worry about caring for her as an old maid (*Pride and Prejudice* 161). As a 27 year old educated woman with little fortune, finding someone who will have her becomes increasingly difficult as she ages.

Charlotte's marriage to Mr. Collins is very much a marriage of necessity. Joel Weinsheimer in his article, "Chance and the Hierarchy of Marriages in *Pride and Prejudice*," claims that Charlotte marries Mr. Collins knowing that achieving happiness is just by chance (408). Charlotte states that "considering Mr. Collins's character, connections, and situation in life, I am convinced that my chance of happiness with him is as fair, as most people can boast on

entering the marriage state” (*Pride and Prejudice* 165). She understands that even though she does not necessarily feel any affection toward him, in time she may learn to love him. This was the case for many women during Austen’s time. The threat of being a single woman often prompted women to enter into marriages that lacked affection. The hope would be that in time both people would learn to love each other, but that was not necessarily always the case. It is sad for Charlotte, though. “The marriage is pitiful and creepy; but it is routinely pitiful and creepy. It is every day” (Amis 87).

Lydia and Wickham’s relationship is the polar opposite of Charlotte and Mr. Collins’ relationship. Where the latter is very much about security and responsibility, the former is mainly about being swept up in passion. Lydia and Wickham’s relationship is one filled with impropriety and irresponsible behavior in the name of love. The narrator even states “how little of permanent happiness could belong to a couple who were only brought together because their passions were stronger than their virtue” (*Pride and Prejudice* 388). Their relationship is a good example of what a taboo and rushed marriage looked like.

Many people of the gentry during this time were particularly concerned with their children engaging in activities similar to those of Lydia and Wickham. According to Coontz,

The explosion of out-of-wedlock childbearing in the poorer classes confirmed the worst fears of the middle and upper classes that personal freedom and romantic love could easily run amok. Middle-class families, trying to prosper in a new social and economic environment, were especially worried that their sons and daughters would succumb to these temptations. (157)

People during this time believed that if love, or certainly love without reason, were involved in a relationship, there would be severe consequences. Children could be cut off from parents, and parents could be ruined if their child engaged in pre-marital sexual activity.

Lydia's elopement is a form of delinquency; it could have led to ostracism and infamy. Because Mr. Darcy is able to patch up her mistake, Lydia's "virtue is retroactively preserved" (Amis 87). By providing her with some kind of settlement, Wickham decides to marry her, which saves the family's and Lydia's reputation (Craik 95). Had Mr. Darcy not been able to appease Wickham with this sum of money, Lydia, as well as the entire family, could have been ruined. After Elizabeth learns about Lydia's actions, she is extremely distraught. She considers the "humiliation, the misery, [Lydia] was bringing on them all" (*Pride and Prejudice* 346). It would have jeopardized all of the Bennet sisters' chances at decent marriages, and it would have been a horrible stain on the Bennet family name.

Why does Lydia decide to do this? Perhaps it is because she gives her affection away to someone who gives her a bit of encouragement, which could be a result of her parents' affectionless marriage (Tave 36). James Sherry in his article "*Pride and Prejudice: The Limits of Society*" argues that Lydia is simply careless and out in society too early (619). Even Elizabeth recognizes this fact. She tells her father, "but she is very young; she has never been taught to think on serious subjects; and for the last half-year, nay, for a twelvemonth, she has been given up to nothing but amusement and vanity. She has been allowed to dispose of her time in the most idle and frivolous manner, and to adopt any opinions that came in her way" (*Pride and Prejudice* 352). Lydia is not old enough to be making these types of decisions for herself. She is immature, and most likely does not fully comprehend the gravity of her actions. In time, she may realize that this is a foolish and hasty decision.

Mr. and Mrs. Bennet's marriage is perhaps the most interesting of all the marriages portrayed in *Pride and Prejudice*. It is also one that is usually put on the backburner by most readers because it is an already established marriage. Even so, their marriage is an interesting one to examine with respect to the time period.

It is suggested that Mr. and Mrs. Bennet married because there was some mutual attraction. In the novel, the narrator states that "her father captivated by youth and beauty, and that appearance of good humour, which youth and beauty generally give, had married a woman whose weak understanding and illiberal mind, had very early in their marriage put an end to all real affection for her" (300). According to Juliet McMaster in her article, "Love and Marriage," Mrs. Bennet marries him for the estate and he marries her for her beauty (63). This is very advantageous to Mrs. Bennet because she comes from a family that has considerably less money than Mr. Bennet. It would not have been entirely uncommon for a man with a bit more wealth to marry a beautiful woman a bit beneath him; however, it was still more common to marry within the same rank.

Mr. and Mrs. Bennet's marriage also has negative consequences. Mr. Bennet did not save properly for his daughters. Mr. Bennet probably did not save because he was banking on having a son to inherit the estate (Hume 307). Clearly, this plan did not work for him, and it causes his family to be in some serious trouble. If he had saved for them, they would not have had to worry so much about finding husbands to support them financially.

In the end, Mr. Bennet changes after being married to Mrs. Bennet for so long. He is annoyed by her and provokes her (Clarke 4). One example of this is early in the novel when he teases her about calling on Mr. Bingley. She pleads with him to do it when in fact he already has gone to see him. Mr. Bennet also subjects his wife to his children's disdain for her, which is not

respectful. This is evident when he sides with Elizabeth in her decision not to marry Mr. Collins. While it is acceptable that he disagrees with his wife, his manner throughout the whole interlude is not conducive to positive dialogue between mother and daughter. He also lets his wife and children embarrass him in public, which decreases his respectability (Sherry 618). At the Netherfield ball, for example, he lets Mary hog the piano and allows Mrs. Bennet, Kitty, and Lydia to make complete fools of themselves, which reflects badly on the family as a whole.

Mr. and Mrs. Bennet's marriage is a puzzling one. While it started out filled with affection and love, it diminished over time. Perhaps this is because this is a marriage of unequal minds. Mrs. Bennet's ignorance and foolishness puts her on a different intellectual level than Mr. Bennet. Mr. Bennet begins to resent his wife, and is not responsible as far as his daughters are concerned, when he should have made sure they were financially stable. His family is also frivolous and improper, which makes it more difficult for Jane and Elizabeth to have advantageous marriages.

Jane Bennet and Mr. Bingley's marriage is almost the ideal marriage in the novel. They have a Cinderella/Prince Charming-like relationship. Jane comes from a family of significantly less wealth, but nonetheless captivates Mr. Bingley despite his pernicious sisters. The two beat all the odds against them and have one of the strongest relationships of the novel. They are definitely one of the couples that the readers root for. While their relationship may not be entirely realistic to the time period, it is a relationship that demonstrates the ability to marry for love and security.

When Mr. Bingley meets Jane for the first time, the attraction is fairly immediate for both parties. Mr. Bingley dances the night away with her at the Meryton ball. David Monaghan, in his essay "Pride and Prejudice: Structure and Social Vision," suggests that while Mr. Darcy and

Elizabeth have many issues with social class differences, Jane and Mr. Bingley seem to prove that affection can be found within different social classes (73). Would this type of relationship be possible during the time? Yes, but it would not be probable. At the Meryton Ball, Mr. Bingley notices Jane because she is the prettiest girl at the gathering. That is why he chooses her. Most likely, relationships of this nature would be few and far between.

Even though their relationship has a strong initial spark, there are some issues that Jane and Mr. Bingley must face, and these issues are: her shyness, her family's impropriety, Darcy's influence, Miss Bingley's influence, and Mr. Bingley's malleability (Weinsheimer 408). Charlotte Lucas even tells Elizabeth that if Jane wants to keep Mr. Bingley, it would do well for her to show him some more encouragement. Mr. Darcy frowns upon the relationship because of the impropriety of the Bennets and because of her shyness. He believes that he is doing a favor for a good friend. Miss Bingley is a snob who does not want her brother marrying beneath him. Eventually, Mr. Bingley takes all of these items into consideration and decides to leave Jane despite his own feelings for her.

These five factors make it difficult for them to finally be together, but it also makes their reunion sweeter. They beat several odds to finally be together. It seems interesting that Austen would put such a relationship in this novel. It is not necessarily characteristic of a marriage at the time. It has both financial security and affection right from the beginning. It also contains a marriage from two different social classes, which would be uncommon.

If this marriage demonstrates the ability to marry for love and security, why not make this the focal relationship? Why is there a need for a relationship like Elizabeth's and Darcy's? Austen must not have found this to be the ideal relationship. Jane and Mr. Bingley's relationship does not have the same depth as Elizabeth and Darcy's relationship. Toward the end of the

novel, Mr. Bennet comments on Jane and Mr. Bingley's relationship: "I have not a doubt of your doing well together. Your tempers are by no means unlike. You are each of you so complying, that nothing will ever be resolved on; so easy, that every servant will cheat you; and so generous, that you will always exceed your income" (*Pride and Prejudice* 433). This is a very profound statement. Jane and Mr. Bingley will have an easy relationship because of their similarities. They will not struggle or argue with one another as Elizabeth and Darcy are bound to do. Perhaps because they have similar temperaments, they will not challenge each other or grow as much as Elizabeth and Darcy can. Even though they will be perfectly happy in their marriage, it will not contain as much depth as Elizabeth's and Darcy's.

Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth's relationship is the centerpiece of the novel. It is a romance that has transcended time. Even though their relationship has much romantic value, it is also one that addresses many issues that women faced during the Regency period. Their relationship is compelling for many reasons: their class differences, their teacher/student relationship, and their completely opposite personalities. In writing about them in this way, Austen creates a relationship and a marriage that is contrary to the norm of the time.

Elizabeth Bennet is forward thinking for a woman in that time period. She knows what she wants. This is evident when Elizabeth refuses Mr. Collins' proposal. She states "I am perfectly serious in my refusal. You could not make *me* happy, and I am convinced that I am the last woman in the world who would make *you* so" (*Pride and Prejudice* 140-141). She is also quick to call out the faults of others. For example, after Mr. Darcy's first proposal, Elizabeth points out all of his faults and her reasons for never wanting to marry him. Unlike Charlotte, she does not believe that she could ever sacrifice a marriage of equal minds or a marriage based upon mutual affection for comfort and security. In making Elizabeth the heroine in this novel, Austen

is setting the stage for a very interesting clash between the old social order and newer ideas on relationships and marriage.

The development of Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth's relationship is a relatively slow process because of the differences in their classes. Elizabeth's family comes from the gentry. They are not a part of the working class, but they are still not incredibly wealthy. Mr. Darcy is part of the old aristocracy. At the beginning of the novel, he looks down upon people of the lower classes. For example, at the Meryton ball, Mr. Darcy's aloof manner could have arisen from the fact that he was with people of a significantly lower class than himself. The narrator explains that Darcy "had seen a collection of people in whom there was little beauty and no fashion, for none of whom he had felt the smallest interest, and from none received either attention or pleasure" (*Pride and Prejudice* 29). Darcy perceives himself to be above the majority at the ball, which is demonstrated by his refusal to dance with anyone.

Their conflicts and interpretations of the other's class is a main cause for their miscommunications and early arguments. Both know and understand their own social class but misunderstand the other (Monaghan 60). Darcy sees the impropriety of Elizabeth's family and makes judgments based upon that information. Elizabeth sees his haughty nature and thinks that he believes himself superior to her. According to Monaghan, "Lacking any experience of the other's world, each relies on stereotypes; Elizabeth accepts the common view that aristocrats are worthless snobs, and Darcy believes that anyone connected with trade must be vulgar and unworthy of respect" (61). Elizabeth's perceptions most likely arise from her encounters with Lady Catherine de Bourgh and her initial encounters with Mr. Darcy. Mr. Darcy's thoughts are shown through his first proposal to Elizabeth when he points out the lack of propriety of her family. Also, "Darcy will be unacceptable to Elizabeth so long as he fails to recognize that the

gentry – middle class as a whole is worthy of his respect. And Elizabeth will continue to blind herself to Darcy's virtues until she has arrived at a fair estimation of the environment which has shaped him" (Monaghan 62). For them to come to an understanding, it will be necessary for them to put aside their stereotypes and come to a meeting of the minds. It seems that early on in the novel it will be impossible for them to set aside their class differences and come together.

Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy are also very stubborn and each is sure that his or her position is the correct one. "Elizabeth prides herself on her individualism and trusts her perceptions, never recognizing that her judgments are really grounded in her feelings. While Darcy is equally assured, his generalizations tend to be those of society at large, and he is far more careful than Elizabeth to base his arguments upon reason" (Butler 209). Elizabeth especially prides herself on her perceptions concerning Mr. Wickham. It is evident that when Elizabeth first meets Mr. Wickham that she bases her judgments of him on her feelings. In reality, Mr. Wickham is a cad, but he presents himself in a way that seems appealing. While some of her judgments about Mr. Darcy are well founded, her feelings are also hurt because of him, which is why she judges him more harshly. He snubs her at the ball and expresses resentment against her family. Before she even hears Mr. Darcy's reasoning behind his actions, she judges him to be haughty and unfeeling.

Mr. Darcy also has several flaws that he must overcome. During Mr. Darcy's first proposal, he explains his reservations in proposing to Elizabeth: her lack of connection and her family's impropriety. Both of these would be valid reasons for a man during this time to shy away from marriage to a woman he cared for. Mr. Darcy also states that "these bitter accusations might have been suppressed, had I with greater policy concealed my struggles, and flattered you into the belief of my being impelled by unqualified, unalloyed inclination; by

reason, by reflection, by everything. But disguise of every sort is my abhorrence” (*Pride and Prejudice* 247). He could have had her believe that he cared about her regardless of their situations in life, but he wants to be honest with her. While Mr. Darcy is more calculated in his assertions, he still is very much mistaken about how people of the lower classes, especially a woman he is proposing marriage to, deserve to be treated. He claims that he is using reason to support his behavior, however, Elizabeth is convinced that he is trying to rationalize his biases.

Their class differences also have another underlying issue: individualism versus society. Growing up in the environment that she did, Elizabeth has grown to value individualism against societal expectations (Butler 203). One example of her valuing individualism over society is through her first interactions with Lady Catherine de Bourgh. At the dinner party, Lady Catherine asks Elizabeth several questions about her family and situation such as: do you play and sing? Do you draw? Did your governess leave? Are your sisters out in society? Elizabeth answers these questions with a certain amount of humor. She does not care about what Lady Catherine’s opinions are about her upbringing or her manner of doing things. Darcy, on the other hand, still stands for social restraint at this point instead of individual freedom (Sherry 617). In his first proposal to Elizabeth, this is evident. He claims that despite everything he holds dear, he cannot help but love Elizabeth. He is going against the constraints of society, and his own personal opinion of her family. He is repulsed by the fact that he is going against everything that he believes about interpersonal interaction. Clearly, they both need to undergo some changes in attitude before they can be united.

Their eventual change in attitude can be explained by the teacher/student relationship that both Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy have. While many critics agree that Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy have a teacher/student relationship, there are some that argue that only Elizabeth learns from the

relationship. For example, Ian Watt states that “her novels dramatize the process whereby feminine and adolescent values are painfully educated in the norms of the mature, rational and educated male world” (qtd. in McMaster “Love and Pedagogy” 42). While this may be true of certain novels at the time, this certainly is not the case for Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth. They learn from each other. During Mr. Darcy’s proposal, he learns from Elizabeth the folly of his assumptions. He realizes that Jane does care for Mr. Bingley, and that insulting a woman is not the best way to win her affections. In his letter to Elizabeth after the first proposal, he explains why he thinks separating Jane and Mr. Bingley was necessary. He also reveals Mr. Wickham’s true character, which explains why he is so revolted by Mr. Wickham.

After reading Mr. Darcy’s letter, Elizabeth learns of her misjudgment. She thinks

how humiliating is this discovery! – Yet, how just a humiliation! – Had I been in love, I could not have been more wretchedly blind. But vanity, not love, has been my folly. Pleased with the preference of one, and offended by the neglect of the other, on the very beginning of our acquaintance, I have courted prepossession and ignorance, and driven reason away, where either were concerned. Till this moment, I never knew myself. (*Pride and Prejudice* 265-266)

This is a turning point in her opinion of Mr. Darcy. McMaster states that “Elizabeth, by the time they are engaged, has learned some tact and forbearance in the exercise of her wit; and Darcy, having learned manners, must go on learning – he must learn to be laughed at” (“Love and Pedagogy” 47). She has learned to tone down her sarcasm and biting tongue, and he has learned to loosen up and respect people of a different class.

Overall, their teacher/student relationship culminates when they reach a point of equality. According to Laura White, “the spark of their relationship depends on their equality of intelligence and perception” (45). At the beginning of the novel, it is evident that Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy are not on equal footing. He believes himself to be superior to her because of his class rank, and because of this, his attitude toward her causes her to have negative impressions about him. In the first proposal, the full extent of their inequality is shown. He comments on her inferiority, and she brings up his dour attitude and his actions toward Wickham. The latter half of the novel demonstrates that both Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy work to find equilibrium. Mr. Darcy rights all of the wrongs that he has committed in Elizabeth’s eyes, and she works to change her opinions of him. He realizes that he has behaved in an ungentlemanly nature and tries to rectify that. She in turn has tamed her wit, and tries to understand him. In the end, “equality of errors led to equality of education” (White 45).

Mr. Darcy’s letter is the turning point in their relationship. There are a few distinctions that should be made as far as the letter is concerned. First, Darcy’s letter explains his objections are the result of a lack of propriety among Elizabeth’s family rather than unworthy connections (Sherry 617). He states in the letter that “the situation of your mother’s family, though objectionable, was nothing in comparison of that total want of propriety so frequently, so almost uniformly betrayed by herself, by your three younger sisters, and occasionally even by your father” (*Pride and Prejudice* 253). His previous assumptions and actions are not an attack on the fact that they have less money than he, but because the Bennets are frivolous. As Elizabeth reads the letter, it is also evident that her thought process is more rational because Austen does not add any of Elizabeth’s biting wit in the passage (White 51). She tries to comprehend what he is saying and is learning more about his character as well as the way her family looks to the outside

world. Her family looks foolish because of their frivolity. The narrator states that “when she came to that part of the letter in which her family were mentioned, in terms of such mortifying, yet merited reproach, her sense of shame was severe” (*Pride and Prejudice* 266). After reading Mr. Darcy’s side of the story concerning Mr. Wickham, Elizabeth slowly begins to realize that her initial impression of Mr. Wickham was grossly incorrect. After realizing this, Elizabeth begins to reconsider all of her interactions with Mr. Darcy. She is ashamed of herself for believing Mr. Wickham so readily. She also realizes that his claims about Jane and Bingley, and her family in general, are not unfounded. Because of her change of attitude and his explanation of himself, this is a turning point in their relationship.

As the events of the novel unfold, their actions toward one another change substantially. They begin to actually understand each other. After Mr. Darcy spends some time with the Gardiners, he understands that they are not people who deserved to be looked down upon. He even invites them to stay an extra day so that Mr. Gardiner can go fishing with him. When Darcy meets the Gardiners, he learns more about people of the gentry and realizes that they are good and kind people; when Elizabeth goes to Pemberley, she begins to understand more about Mr. Darcy’s character and how he takes care of the people he loves (Monaghan 62). Mr. Darcy’s servant Mrs. Reynolds sings his praises. In her view, Mr. Darcy is generous and kind hearted. She says that Mr. Darcy will be just like his father, “just as affable to the poor” (*Pride and Prejudice* 311). He is not who Elizabeth originally imagines him to be. The praises from a servant would bear much more weight because the way a man treats his servants tells what his true character really is. For Elizabeth especially, knowing that he treats his subordinates in this manner makes her respect him more as an individual. Overall, they both began to realize the folly of their first impressions.

Another major development in their relationship occurs when Mr. Darcy finds Lydia and Mr. Wickham and agrees to pay Mr. Wickham the amount he requires. Elizabeth learns of this from Mrs. Gardiner. Mr. Darcy is attempting to right the wrong that Mr. Wickham committed against the Bennet family. He sympathizes with the Bennet family, and he feels responsible for the whole situation. If he had revealed Mr. Wickham's true character sooner, Lydia would not have been able to put herself into this compromising situation.

Unlike many relationships of the time, Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet cross class barriers and marry for love. During Mr. Darcy's second proposal, it is confirmed that they had a student/teacher relationship. They discuss their past relationship history, and explain more fully their thought processes. Mr. Darcy even says "you taught me a lesson, hard indeed at first, but most advantageous. By you, I was properly humbled" (*Pride and Prejudice* 460). Elizabeth also states that she was ashamed by her actions, especially after all Mr. Darcy did for her family. This is the most significant relationship in the novel because they both challenge each other and grow together. Elizabeth, when explaining Mr. Darcy's love for her, states that Mr. Darcy is "sick of civility, of deference, of officious attention. You were disgusted with the women who were always speaking and looking, and thinking for *your* approbation alone. I roused, and interested you, because I was so unlike *them*" (*Pride and Prejudice* 472). Elizabeth is an intellectual equal, and she attracts him in a way no ordinary woman at that time can. They learn important things from each other, which makes their mutual affection for each other stronger.

A final aspect of their relationship that makes it so unique is the fact that Elizabeth still has freedom when she is married to Mr. Darcy. She had control of her own finances, and is able to send money to Lydia when necessary. Her ability to have this kind of freedom allows her to have a more genuine and "no strings attached" love and affection for Mr. Darcy.

Reactions

Pride and Prejudice is more than a romance novel. It is a discussion of society during the Regency. It is a clash between traditional and newer thinking concerning marriage. As Hume writes, “*Pride and Prejudice* can be read as a delightful romance, but properly understood, the romance camouflages a grimly realistic depiction of the dismal position of genteel women in Austen’s society” (289). As mentioned previously, it was important for women during this time period to marry in order to be secure. Elizabeth Bennet challenges the traditional position of women in Regency England. Dillon claims that “modern readers find the character of Elizabeth refreshing because she pushes against early nineteenth-century standards regarding women’s limited choices by rejecting the pompous clergyman. Her desire to marry for love rather than material security contrasts with the more pragmatic ‘realism’ of her neighbor Charlotte” (214). Modern readers are able to better understand Elizabeth because of this fact. If the reader is truly able to look at the text with relation to the time, though, she will find that Austen is writing about several different types of marriages that could occur for women, with Charlotte’s being the most routine and Elizabeth’s being the most radical.

Through Austen’s portrayals of different types of marriages, the reader catches a glimpse of what life could be like during the Regency. Lydia and Wickham’s marriage illustrates passion, irresponsibility, and the consequences of marrying. Mr. and Mrs. Bennet’s marriage shows that marrying a pretty face and not preparing for the future could have troublesome consequences. Charlotte and Mr. Collins’s marriage exemplifies the typical marriage at the time. Jane and Bingley’s marriage seems to have both security and love, but lacks certain elements to make it the focal marriage. By making Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy the main characters and the main couple, Austen is placing an emphasis on the fact that love in a marriage is important.

Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy's marriage is the model because they move above and beyond the social constraints that are placed upon them. Love can indeed transcend the bounds of class structure. A marriage of equal minds and hearts is more important than a marriage based upon convenience and security.

Austen shows the reader that women should wait for a relationship that contains love and respect, and she shows the reader what love and respect look like in a relationship. Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy are active in their love for each other. They are equal partners in their marriage. While Jane and Mr. Bingley have a seemingly pleasant mix of love and security, they are both passive and impressionable partners in their relationship. Finally, Elizabeth does not fundamentally change after she marries Mr. Darcy. She is still her witty and charming self, but now, she understands who Mr. Darcy is. Their marriage, as the novel emphasizes, is one to be emulated.

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Personal Statement

Pride and Prejudice has always been one of my favorite stories. When I was a young teen, my older sisters and I would have Jane Austen movie marathons, and of course *Pride and Prejudice* was included. I loved the romance between Elizabeth and Darcy. I found a bit of myself in Elizabeth Bennet. I have a fiery personality, and I am very passionate about what I believe. I loved the elegance of the time period, and I always wished I would find my very own Mr. Darcy.

When the time came for me to start picking Honors colloquia, I found the Jane Austen colloquium. Of course, this was one colloquium that I could not miss! I was put on the waiting list, and every day I would check to see if someone dropped. Luckily, I was able to make it into the class. Over the course of the semester, I began to realize that Jane Austen really was not writing simple romance stories. She was writing about real issues at the time, especially for women. I found it incredibly compelling. It was during this class that I decided that I wanted to write my thesis on *Pride and Prejudice*.

I approached Ms. Dalton in the fall of 2014 and presented her with my idea, and asked her to be my advisor. I knew that it would be challenging, but that with her guidance I would have the most polished thesis. I drew up a preliminary schedule and began to work on my thesis.

First, I began to look for my sources. I scoured the library and the internet for good sources. It took a lot of time to sift through all of the information (about six months in total). It was my goal to find three or four sources per month and summarize them in an annotated bibliography.

In June, I began to write down all of my important quotations from each source. I also grouped each of these quotations into different categories. These categories ranged from

individuals within the novel to history of marriage. From there, I was able to create an outline for the thesis. This helped me to stay on track and organize my thoughts.

When I actually began to write the thesis, I wrote it one section at a time. I sent each section to Ms. Dalton for comments. As soon as I received her feedback, I fixed as much as I could at the time and then I moved on to the next section. I did this for several months. I have never really gone back through for revisions for papers except for grammar mistakes. After getting the feedback, I realized that there were several places where I could develop my ideas and create a stronger argument. Overall, I wrote about four drafts of my entire thesis.

There were several times when I was writing this thesis that I became frustrated and discouraged. Sometimes I became bogged down in the information, and I had to take a step back. I had to reflect on what I was writing, why I was writing it, and what my own thoughts were. This really helped me to insert my own voice in the paper.

Overall, this exercise has taught me a lot about myself. I know how important it is for me to go back through my writing and edit not only grammar, but content. I have proven to myself that I can write a coherent thesis; I never thought that I would be able to do something of this magnitude. I am proud of the work that I have accomplished, and I think this was a wonderful capstone for my time in the Ball State Honors College.

Annotated Bibliography

Adkins, Roy, and Lesley Adkins. *Jane Austen's England*. New York: Viking, 2013. Print.

This book gives an in depth description of what life during the Regency was like. There were a few chapters that would be especially pertinent to my research that concerned weddings, wealth, work, and leisure and pleasure. This book will help me to understand different class distinctions and what were societal norms.

Amis, Martin. "Force of Love: Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen." *A Truth Universally Acknowledged: 33 Great Writers on Why We Read Jane Austen*. Ed. Susannah Carson. New York: Random House, 2009. 83-89. Print.

This is another article that delves into why we read Jane Austen. First, it gives a reason to not dislike Mrs. Bennet so much because we are all rooting for the same thing: the main characters to be happily married. Next, it gives some details about Charlotte and Lydia's marriages. It portrays them as two extremes on the marriage spectrum with Charlotte marrying for convenience and Lydia marrying for passion. Finally, it also points out that the narrator seems to place more blame on Lydia even though Elizabeth succumbed to Wickham's lies too. This has a few interesting quotes that could be useful to my research.

Beverley, Jo. "Gold Diggers of 1813." *Flirting with Pride & Prejudice: Fresh Perspectives on the Original Chick-lit Masterpiece*. Ed. Jennifer Crusie. Dallas, TX: BenBella, 2005. 33-40. Print.

This essay details financial aspects of marriage in the early 1800s. Beverly details what the different amounts presented in *Pride and Prejudice* mean as it relates to today's monetary value. She also clarifies how important it was for a woman at that time to

marry for money, and how it was more socially acceptable for a man to marry higher than his station. This will be a useful source to help me to understand the finances surrounding marriages at the time.

Brown, Ivor John Carnegie. *Jane Austen and Her World*. New York: H.Z. Walck, 1966. Print.

This book is a biography of Jane Austen. Aside from just discussing Jane's own life, the book also discusses aspects of the times in which she lived. It shows clothes, farm and military equipment, and the way houses were set up. There are also several great pictures that I could use in the body of my thesis.

Butler, Marilyn. *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1975. Print.

This book outlines the different ideas that are present in novels that occurred around the same time as Jane Austen's novels. The first half of the book discusses the different broad ideas that were being revolutionized in the early 19th century as well as what ideas were considered conservative. The author argues that some of Austen's work is revolutionary (*Pride and Prejudice*) while others are more conservative and follow more traditional themes (*Mansfield Park*). In the second half of the book, there is a specific section that outlines *Pride and Prejudice* and discusses whether the novel follows a traditional novel scheme or not. This book contains a lot of information that could be useful background information and could help me to determine whether Jane Austen was a revolutionary author.

Clarke, Susanna. "Why We Read Jane Austen: Young Person in Interesting Situations." *A Truth Universally Acknowledged: 33 Great Writers on Why We Read Jane Austen*. Ed.

Susannah Carson. New York: Random House, 2009. 3-8. Print.

This article gives an interesting perspective on why people still read Jane Austen today. It discusses why women who were married have more opportunities than women who are single. It also mentions Mr. Bennet and his relationship to his wife which is useful to my research. It also mentions that she only finds Darcy attractive after they have realized the error of their assumptions. This is most likely more useful as a reference rather than actually in my thesis.

Coontz, Stephanie. *Marriage, a History: From Obedience to Intimacy or How Love Conquered Marriage*. New York: Viking Penguin, 2005. Print.

This book explains the changes that marriage has undergone since the beginning of time. It details the evolution of marriage from ancient times to medieval times to Victorian times to the sexual revolution of the 20th century. This book specifically outlines the ways that marriage changed during the times that Jane Austen lived and wrote about. It highlights how marriage changed from being an institution of financial security to one of love. This resource is a gold mine for the different ways I want to explain the changes to the institution of marriage.

Coss, P. R. "The Formation of the English Gentry." *Past & Present* 147 (1995): 38–64. *JSTOR*. Web. 2 Nov. 2015.

This article gives a detailed account of the formation and emergence of the use of the word "gentry." The term gentry has been used for centuries, and has been a way to generalize a group of English citizens who were beneath the nobility, but still above the common people. This article will be useful in describing the gentry during Austen's time.

Craik, W. A. *Jane Austen; in Her Time*. London: Nelson, 1969. Print.

This book details life in the Regency period. It was intended for modern readers to help them to better understand Austen's writing. Most people who read her novels when they first came out understood certain social, political, and religious norms that are not popular today. In the chapter titled "God and Mammon," there is a large section dedicated to explaining marriages during the time and how they were closely related to money. Aside from specific mentions of marriage, this book is very useful to aid in understanding the time in which Jane Austen lived and wrote.

Dillon, Brian. "Circumventing the Biographical Subject: Jane Austen and the Critics." *Rocky Mountain Review* 46.4 (1992): 213-21. *JSTOR*. Web. 13 Apr. 2015.

This article is a critical review of Jane Austen and how her life helped to shape how she wrote about her characters. The author questions why Austen never married and if that had an impact upon how she wrote her characters. Perhaps she never found an intellectual equal or someone who she truly loved, so she remained a spinster. This article also suggests that feminists generally enjoy her female characters because they are rejecting the conventions of the time and fulfilling their own destinies. On page 219, it specifically states how "ideological shifts" through Austen's "engagement with both the gentry and women's cultures" can be traced in *Pride and Prejudice*." This article is very useful for my research because it identifies how Austen was revolutionary in the way that she wrote about marriage, and it also gives some critical reviews of her work.

Giles, Heidi. "Resolving the Institution of Marriage in Eighteenth-Century Courtship Novels." *Rocky Mountain Review* 66.1 (2012): 76-82. *JSTOR*. Web. 13 Apr. 2015.

This article is a great source that depicts how Austen was revolutionary in the development of the eighteenth century heroine. This author argues that through the use

of the word “resolve,” Austen is empowering her heroines to choose their own destiny so to speak. Originally, this use of the word resolve was used to describe how women would wait for a marriage to come their way (“wait with resolve”). With Austen, she uses it to emphasize the gaining idea that a woman can have a marriage the way that she wants. On page 80, she specifically outlines instances in *Pride and Prejudice* where Austen “turns from resolution in mind to resolution in deed.” While this article has an emphasis on the word “resolve” it is a great introduction to how the female identity was being added into novels as it related to marriage.

Hume, Robert D. "Money in Jane Austen." *The Review of English Studies* 64.264 (2013): 289-310. *JSTOR*. Web. 29 May 2015.

This article discusses the several different implications of money in *Pride and Prejudice*. First, Hume claims that *Pride and Prejudice* is not just a romance, but a novel revealing the dire straits that women could be in if they did not marry rich or inherit money. An interesting point in this article is that the Bennet family was not necessarily in dire straits; in fact, the family was well within the gentry class. However, because Mr. Bennet did not save any money (perhaps due to his assumption that he would eventually have a male heir to inherit Longbourn) his wife and children would have to pinch pennies if he were to die. Another interesting point that this article brings up is the fact that most modern readers sympathize with Elizabeth more than Charlotte, however, Charlotte's plight was more of a reality at the time. Finally, the article takes the different incomes of Mr. Bennet, Mr. Bingley, and Mr. Darcy and translates them into modern dollars. This article will be a great resource to me because it highlights some of the class distinctions that are present in the novel.

McMaster, Juliet. "Love and Marriage." *Jane Austen on Love*. Victoria, B.C.: English Literary Studies, U of Victoria, 1978. 63-80. Print.

This chapter discusses the relationship between love and marriage in Austen's novels. This is a particularly good article because it mentions Mr. and Mrs. Bennet's marriage (which is not mentioned in many other sources). The chapter also mentions the Bingleys, Collinses, and Elizabeth and Darcy. While some of the information is a bit repetitive and not incredibly deep, the inclusion of Mr. and Mrs. Bennet's marriage makes this source incredibly useful.

---. "Love and Pedagogy: Austen's Beatrice and Benedick." *Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice: Modern Critical Interpretations*. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea House, 1987. 39-47. Print.

This essay is about the relationship between Elizabeth and Darcy. McMaster suggests that in Jane Austen's novels, the heroine "falls in love with a man who is her tutor, or her mentor, or her superior in age, experience, or authority" (39). The basis of the romantic relationships in her novels, especially *Pride and Prejudice* is the idea that the "full mutual engagement of head and heart is what is passionate; and any substitute...is not only founded on a delusion, but a delusion in itself" (42). McMaster suggests that the relationship that Elizabeth and Darcy have is one that is a student-teacher relationship (both of them are student and teacher). The essay continues to discuss the ways that they "test" each other in order to learn about their shortcomings and fix them. This essay poses an interesting discussion about some of the inner workings of Elizabeth and Darcy's relationship.

Maugham, W. S. "Jane Austen and *Pride and Prejudice*." *A Truth Universally Acknowledged: 33 Great Writers on Why We Read Jane Austen*. Ed. Susannah Carson. New York: Random House, 2009. 70-82. Print.

This article was written by W.S. Maugham about certain aspects of Jane Austen's life and why she wrote about what she wrote. It begins by giving some background on Austen and discusses her humor. Then, it gives some background about when *Pride and Prejudice* was written and published. The most relevant part of this article is that the author points out that Jane Austen took the common and made it uncommon by examining it in greater detail. This source gives me some good quotes about why Jane Austen is such a fascinating author.

Moler, Kenneth L. *Pride and Prejudice: A Study in Artistic Economy*. Boston: Twayne, 1989. Print.

This book begins with historical and literary contexts and critical reception of *Pride and Prejudice* and finishes by detailing several themes and motifs of the novel. At the beginning of the book, the most useful chapter is the one concerning critical reception. It would be advantageous to understand how different readers at different times reacted to the novel. In the second part of the book, the chapter on the theme of moral blindness and self-knowledge would be the most helpful. It takes a deeper look at the individual characteristics of Elizabeth and Darcy that makes them driving forces in the novel. While this book is interesting and presents an in-depth look at the characters, it does not provide any straightforward information about marriage in *Pride and Prejudice*.

Monaghan, David. "Pride and Prejudice: Structure and Social Vision." *Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice: Modern Critical Interpretations*. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea House, 1987. 59-83. Print.

This essay details the social conventions that are apparent in the novel that dictate the actions of the characters. While this essay mainly focuses on Elizabeth and Darcy's relationship, it does mention social aspects of Bingley and Jane, Wickham and Lydia, and Mr. Collins and Charlotte. Monaghan discusses Elizabeth and Darcy's station in life (60-61). Upon their first meeting, they "social typecast" each other based upon what they believe about that station of life. This essay also discusses various social functions that occur throughout the novel and why the characters interact the way they do. This is an excellent source that demonstrates the societal norms at the time, and it showcases the distinct differences between the aristocracy, the gentry, and the middle-class.

Sherry, James. "Pride and Prejudice: The Limits of Society." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 19.4 (1979): 609-22. *JSTOR*. Web. 13 Apr. 2015.

This article focuses on certain societal norms and constraints that are imposed upon the characters throughout the novel. While much of the article seems a bit redundant and filled with summaries about the novel, there are a few things mentioned that can pertain directly to my research. The article discusses what exactly propriety and impropriety are as it relates to specific characters (Mr. Bennet, Darcy, Wickham and Lydia). It also describes a bit of the social divide between people like the Bingley sisters and Darcy versus Elizabeth and her family. It also discusses some aspects of sociability and how that can affect how people perceive their status. While there are a few aspects

of this article that can be useful, I believe that other articles mention some of these aspects in a clearer way.

Tave, Stuart M. "Affection and the Amiable Man." *Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice: Modern Critical Interpretations*. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea House, 1987. 21-38. Print.

This essay highlights several different marriages throughout *Pride and Prejudice*, namely Elizabeth and Darcy, Lydia and Wickham, and Charlotte and Mr. Collins. It describes how each marriage differs in happiness and affection. It also examines Elizabeth's initial impressions of different people throughout the book and whether she thinks they are amiable or not. For Elizabeth and Darcy, "the form in which domestic felicity comes...is unusual and it is there not by luck" (31). For Charlotte, affection is of little importance. For her if love followed a marriage, that was a bonus. When discussing Lydia's marriage, Tave suggests that her affections were always fluctuating and that she just attached herself to someone who gave her a bit of encouragement. This source could be very useful for my thesis because it highlights the differences in the marriages, and how each one represents a different kind of marriage that happened during that time.

Tomalin, Claire. *Jane Austen: A Life*. New York: Knopf, 1997. Print.

This book is an in depth biography of Jane Austen. While the other biography that I found was rather brief, this explains with great detail the aspects of Austen's life. This is a particularly good biography because it places the creation of the books within certain times in Austen's life and it becomes easier to understand why she wrote what she

did and how the timing made a difference. This source will be crucial in writing my thesis.

Weinsheimer, Joel. "Chance and the Hierarchy of Marriages in *Pride and Prejudice*." *ELH* 39.3 (1972): 404-19. *JSTOR*. Web. 13 Apr. 2015.

This article presents an interesting take upon why Jane Austen wrote about marriages in *Pride and Prejudice* the way she did. It details why the idea of chance is important to the developing relationships. Some of the different circumstances that are related to chance that help to develop certain relationships are "the rerouting and rescheduling of the proposed trip to the Lake country, the early return of Darcy to Pemberley in time to meet Elizabeth there, and Elizabeth's failure to expose Wickham to Lydia or her parents" (406). As many of my other sources, this one describes Charlotte's marriage to Mr. Collins and how she related that happiness was up to chance. This article also mentions Mr. Bennett and his relationship to his wife and daughters which could be useful. It could definitely be expanded upon. Overall, this is an interesting take on why certain relationships developed the way they did.

White, Laura Mooneyham. "Pride and Prejudice: Towards a Common Language." *Romance, Language, and Education in Jane Austen's Novels*. New York: St. Martin's, 1988. 45-68. Print.

This chapter discusses the differences Elizabeth and Darcy have because of the different types of language they use and how they come together after they find a common language. Elizabeth uses wit and Darcy uses reserve and privilege. White mentions how they have a rhetorical division in the first half of the novel, but eventually, they have a common language and common way of seeing the world. She also mentions

how Elizabeth and Darcy are the only two protagonists in an Austen novel that have to fight together to find an equilibrium in order to be together. This is an interesting concept and could be useful for my thesis, but other sources are more important.